

What is claimed is:

1.-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Amended) A combination sandwich press and grill device having a lower housing with a lower cooking surface and an upper housing with an upper cooking surface wherein:

the lower housing receives a removable, full length drip tray that collects drippings from the upper cooking surface when the device is in a fully open orientation; and wherein

the drip tray is removable from the lower housing by sliding it out a front of the lower housing.

17. (Amended) The device of claim 16, wherein:

the upper cooking surface has a discharge spout formed in a rim of the upper cooking surface, the discharge spout leading into the drip tray when the device is in a fully open orientation.

18. (Amended) The device of claim 17, wherein:

the drip tray protrudes extends from a rear of the lower housing.

19. (Amended) The device of claim 18, wherein:

the drip tray protrudes extends from a front of the lower housing and the lower cooking surface has a discharge spout that leads into that portion of the drip tray that protrudes extends from the front of the lower housing.

20. (Amended) A combination sandwich press and grill device having a lower housing with a lower cooking surface and an upper housing with an upper cooking surface, the upper and lower housings being interconnected by a hinge,

The device of claim 16, wherein:

the upper housing has a closed orientation, a fully open orientation and an intermediate and locked orientation, the device positionable into the fully open orientation only upon activation of a hinge locking mechanism that is carried by the hinge that interconnects the upper and lower housings.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Amended) The device of claim 20, wherein:

~~the locking mechanism and hinge further comprise a track arm that a mechanism~~ limits the range of motion of a lower edge of the upper cooking surface when the upper housing is in the fully open orientation

23. (Amended) The device of claim 20 16, wherein:

the upper housing is carried by a “U” shaped frame having a transverse handle and the handle serves as a foot when the upper housing is in the fully open orientation.

24. (New) The device of claim 20, wherein:

the hinge locking mechanism further comprises a lock barrel having a central opening into which extends a lock shaft;  
the lock shaft being rotatable, by a user, from a locked to an unlocked position;  
the lock shaft supporting a spring biased cam pin and a spring biased reset pin;  
the barrel supporting a pivoting toggle, the toggle having a head and a tail;  
the cam pin impinging on the head of the toggle when the lock shaft is in the locked position and on the tail of the toggle when the lock shaft is in the unlocked position.

25. (New) The device of claim 24, wherein:

the lock barrel is carried by a lock barrel retainer formed in a corner of a cooking surface.

26. (New) The device of claim 24, wherein:

a facia is attached to the lock barrel; and

a control knob is coupled to the lock shaft through the facia and lock barrel.

27. (New) The device of claim 16, wherein:

the lower cooking surface is tilt adjustable and controlled by an actuator located on the exterior of the lower housing.

28. (New) The device of claim 16, wherein:

the lower cooking surface temperature is controlled by a variable thermostat and an upper cooking surface temperature is controlled by a fixed thermostat.

29. (New) The device of claim 28, wherein:

the variable thermostat is controlled by an actuator located on an exterior of the lower housing, the lower cooking surface being tilt adjustable.

30. (New) The device of claim 16, wherein:

the upper cooking surface has ribs.